

## Andrew Jackson to John McNairy, May 9, 1797, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO JOHN MCNAIRY.

Nashville, May 9, 1797

*Sir:* your Letter of the 4th Instant is now before me and was handed me by mr Mitchel this day, I cannot help observing the date, and the time of delivery, and how closely your letter keeps pace with another Subject, Communicated to me whilst in philadelphia, and now under Consideration.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jackson seems by this to connect his quarrel with McNairy with that which he was then conducting by letters with Governor Sevier.

But to attend to the substance of your letter, as I do not intend following you in Detail, and for this reason, that you requested Candeur of me; in your letter to me in philadelphia in the Essence of Candeur I dealt with you, and you sir in the Instance of the Suit of Sharp, made Such an infraction upon the Strict principles of friendship, which was persued by your Jealous inquiries with Respect to My friendship, that Convinced Me, that unless you were convicted in your own Mind, that you had given Cause to me, no longer to be in habits of friendship with you, such Conduct, would not have been persued by you, and the information I Recd. on the day you applied to me in the Street of Nashvill to know if there was any plotts in contemplation at Knoxville to prevent you from being appointed as Judge, and which I recd. immediately after Determined me in My Mind, that you were not Capable of true principles of friendship, and that my friendship was attached to a Jealous reed not to be Depended on;

## Library of Congress

I shall only take notice of one or two sentences of your Letter; you observe that before the Election for members to meet in Convention you were informed by your Brother Andrew that I was heard to say “that I was not your friend, and that I did not wish that you should be Elected”. But this I find upon Calling on your Brother is misrepresented by you (as many parts of your Letter would turn out to be should I put myself to the Trouble of enquiry, which I do not mean to do) he says he was informed, that I had said I was not your friend but I wished you to be Elected, and cannot well recollect his informant, but the person that he thinks informed him, disavows it (do not construe this as so as to draw Andrews veracity in question) but it shews upon what foundation your Jealousy rested and your Conduct towards Col. Donelson, shewed (and for that purpose mentioned in my letter) how little regard you had for strict friendship, in him you always found a steadfast friend, without disguise, and upon what futile grounds your Jealousy was raised, and now sir I have to observe why as you were in possession, of those grounds of suspicion (you say you were) you did not Communicate them to me. my information respecting your Jealous Conduct and Enquiries had never reached me, untill after the Convention, and a great part of it, after your Enquiry at me with respect to the plotts against you at Knoxville, and with Respect to my attachment to Major Tatam,<sup>2</sup> and proposing him as a Judge. the world, I hope knows I am his friend, and I hope always to Continue so, and I told you I had named him as a Judge to a circle

<sup>2</sup> Maj. Howell Tatum, formerly a Revolutionary officer from North Carolina, a lawyer in Tennessee, a surveyor, and Jackson's topographical engineer in 1814–1815.

of the Member of Convention but to hasten to the last Sentence of your letter which is the only part, that Deserves my serious attention “you say to Confess a fault through fear, is indeed mean, but not to be afraid, of standing in one is brutish”, If this Sentence is intended to be, by you confined to yourself, (as I conceive you to be the first Egressor,) you need not be confined long to a Brutish Situation *as the door is open* but If intended for me, we are at Issue; and I do Reply, that it is an ungentleman puppy like Expression, and these Expressions *I wish to be taken in the worst sense of the words*.

Library of Congress

I am Andrew Jackson